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Letter to the Editor

Smoking profile among a sample of women from rural Rize, Turkey

Tobacco use is a preventable cause of death, cancers, heart and lung diseases. World Health Organization (WHO) reports that unless urgent action is taken tobacco could kill one billion people during the 21st century.[1] About 250 million women in the world are daily smokers. About 22% of women in developed countries and 9% of women in developing countries smoke tobacco. "Global Adult Tobacco Survey",[2] conducted by Turkish Statistical Institute in 2012, is a mirror of Turkish national smoking status. The results of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey,[2] conducted on women aged 15 and older, showed that 13.1% are current tobacco smokers, 7.8% are former smokers and 79.1% represents those who never smoked. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (2012) shows that in rural areas, 6.7% of women are tobacco smokers, whereas 93.3% are non-smokers. A study conducted in Turkey's rural area of Rize revealed that the smoking rate among women was very low in the region. Rize is a city in the eastern part of Turkey built around a small bay on the Black Sea coast on a narrow strip of flat land between the sea and the mountains behind. The nearest airport is 66 km away (Trabzon, 30th largest city in Turkey) and the distance between Rize and Ankara (the capital of Turkey) is around 810 km. For this study, the medical records of 844 consecutive patients, 15 years and older, who were admitted to the obstetrics and gynecology clinic of Cayeli State Hospital between December 2013 and January 2014 were analyzed. During medical history taking, every patient was asked whether she was smoking. The answers were recorded as yes/no. Microsoft Excel was used for data processing and statistical analyses. Among 844 patients (mean age: 33.48 ± 9.2 (15–83)), 399 were pregnant, 27 were tobacco smokers (3.19%, confidence interval ± 1.19, 95% confidence level). This research showed that tobacco smoking rate in this area was lower than the national rate (3.19% versus 6.7%). Among 27 smokers, 5 were pregnant. The Smoking rate among pregnant women was 1.25% (confidence interval ± 1.09, 95% confidence level). Several studies have been conducted in different regions of Turkey; they have shown that the rate of smoking among pregnant women varies between 3% and 37%.[3] The Smoking rate for pregnant women in rural Rize was very low when compared with the previous literature. According to the results of Global Adult Tobacco Survey,[2] when age groups were analyzed, the 25–44 age group had the highest ratio. The results of the present research were consistent with this data; among 27 current smokers, 15 (55.56%) were within 26–45 age group.

This brief report is showing that, when compared with national data, the smoking rate among women is very low in rural Rize. Further research is needed to enlighten the socioeconomic reasons and medical consequences of this issue. Thereby, hopefully, efficient and practical measures to decrease smoking rates may be implemented.

Conflict of interest statement

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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